

Claims.

Feb. 9 2006

15. (Replaces claim 6) (currently amended) Butt-joining method comprising:

In two abutting metal strips punching a substantially keystone shaped slot into both abutments, wherein said slots have two rounded edges produced by both a punch and a die,

- 5 inserting into said two slots a deformable slug, clinching said slug into said slots, thereby securely butt-joining said strips.

7. (currently amended) Butt-joining clinch method comprising:

In two abutting metal strips punching a substantially rectangular slot into both abutments,

wherein said slots have two rounded edges produced by both a punch and a die,

- 10 using one knock-out-slug from said punching, re-inserting said slug into the center of both said abutments, clinching said slug into said slots thereby securely butt-joining said strips.

8.(cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (previously amended) Butt-joining clinch method as defined in claim 7 wherein said

- 15 metal strips are of other material than metal.

11. (currently amended) Butt-joining clinch method as defined in claim 15 wherein a plurality of slots is used.

12 (previously amended) Butt-joining clinch method as defined in claim 7 wherein clinching height produced by said clinching is flush or slightly below  
2d the surface of said strips.

13. (previously amended) Butt-joining clinch method as defined in claim 7 wherein said metal strips are mitered at 45 degrees and abutted at said mitering, with four said mitered strips forming a frame.

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14. (currently amended) Butt-joining clinch method as defined in claim 13 wherein  
during said mitering remnants of said metal strips is purposely left at said 45 degrees.

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
- 5 3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)